

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

June 4, 2013

It has come to my attention that the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) is proposing to adopt an air quality regulation that will prohibit fire rings on the beach. Although I have been informed the AQMD's original June 7 hearing date has been postponed, nonetheless, the AQMD could rule on this in the near future, and I do not want Los Angeles County to lose the opportunity to participate in the debate and take a role in determining its future related to beach fire rings.

From the time of the beach parties of Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon, beach campfires are a low cost time-honored tradition and recreational pastime in the Los Angeles County area – indeed, all of Southern California – and appeal to the wide and diverse population that Los Angeles County serves. In fact, when the County took over operation of Dockweiler State Beach in 1975, the fire rings were already there and to this day remain. At a quick glance, parking revenue alone evidences that our residents and visitors are willing to pay for something they appreciate – recreating at the beach in the evening hours surrounding a fire ring! Specifically, parking revenue earned after 4:00 p.m. at Dockweiler State Beach amounts to as much as 43% of that beach's parking lot proceeds annually, or approaching \$570,000 in absolute dollars. Again, this is after the typical beach-going activity is over for the day.

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ANTONOVICH _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

I understand the science the AQMD is relying upon in support of its prohibition has not been widely dispersed or understood, nor have the health risks and hazards specifically associated with beach fire rings. Further disconcerting is that campfires around the State's park campgrounds are apparently specifically exempted from the proposed prohibition. What's good for State parks, it seems to me, ought to be good for State beaches or any others. Moreover, anyone who does not wish to be exposed to the health impacts associated with beach fires can merely go to another beach operated by our fine Department of Beaches and Harbors or other beaches in the region. Let's not be hasty in legislating away something that can be voluntarily avoided or, in contrast, embraced. Picking on beach fire rings due to their health risks seems to me to be one of the lesser causes of the various ailments that our residents and visitors might suffer. Indeed, at Dockweiler State Beach alone, we have airplanes taking off from LAX and flying overhead, automobiles driving on Vista del Mar atop the Dockweiler slopes, Los Angeles City's Hyperion wastewater/sewage treatment plant immediately across the street, and both the Chevron oil refinery and Los Angeles City's Scattergood power plant further south along the road.

Having said this, I am, nonetheless, aware of areas where residents are particularly impacted due to their proximity to fire rings immediately adjacent to their homes. And, I know of certain local governments that have determined to regulate more carefully the use of beach fire rings in their jurisdictions. Accordingly, I believe an appropriate compromise is to allow local jurisdictions to regulate or prohibit beach fire rings as they see fit. This is the approach Newport Beach, which initiated the discussion in the first place, has adopted and one which I believe we, too, should endorse. Whereas Newport Beach is most likely to prohibit or heavily regulate its fire rings, I would hazard a guess that Los Angeles County will choose to keep our beach fires kindled!

I, THEREFORE, HEREBY MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS oppose any action on the part of the Air Quality Management District to prohibit Statewide any and all fire rings on beaches and instead allow local jurisdictions to determine for themselves what is right for their areas and their constituents.

FURTHER, I MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS direct the Chief Executive Officer to send a letter to the Air Quality Management District on behalf of the Board advising the District of its support for beach fire rings and local control.

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SN:ha